

## The Picnic Basket Auction by Carerra\_os

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Day 23 Picnic

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Steve is nervous peeking out from behind the thick velvet curtain in front of the auditorium stage separating him and the rest of the unlucky soles being auctioned off for renovations on town hall. He has not seen Billy milling about anywhere yet and he is beginning to think when Billy said “Nothing in the world could make me miss the chance to own your ass for a couple hours.” with a wink, that he had honestly been joking.

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## **Author's Note:**

Day Twenty-Three Fire from the Harringrove April Prompts

## **The Picnic Basket Auction**

"Remind me why I agreed to this again?" Steve asks as he carefully wraps fresh bread in a linen towel and puts it in one of the two baskets on the table before wrapping the other loaf he recently pulled out of the oven. The rest of the two near identical baskets have already been packed, fresh fruits all cleaned and packaged in cute little containers, some sliced expensive cheeses and fancy meats that Steve's parents had imported a while back and will never miss. There are chocolates and a thick picnic blanket in both, Steve's containing a fancy six pack of beer and a second cheaper six pack, while the second basket Carol's has a bottle of sweet wine and two delicate glasses.

"It's for charity, baby." Carol says from her seat at the table not helping, in fact she has not really helped at all just sat there and bossed Steve around like always while snacking on the little finger sandwiches he made that she deemed unworthy of their baskets.

"You could have gotten anyone to do it. You could have gotten Hargrove, do you realize how many bids he would have gotten, he's so fucking pretty." Steve says a little worry growing in his belly, what if Billy does not come, what if he is wrong and he is not interested, what if he bids on someone else basket, Steve might actually cry if that happens, not in front of anyone just when he gets home after whatever terrible picnic date he ends up going on. Carol catches his hand and gives it a squeeze pulling him out of his spiraling thoughts.

"You don't have to be jealous, you're pretty too Steve." Keith offers and they both turn sharply to stare at him having forgotten he was

here. Keith just sits there with an uninterested look on his face as he shoves a finger sandwich in his mouth.

"He's not jealous of Billy you nitwit, he wants to sit on his dick." Carol says with a grin holding up the two concert tickets that Steve thought he had hidden better in his basket. "Look at this prime man bait he shelled out for." She says gleefully, shaking them in Keith's direction, pulling them back and away when Steve tries to grab them.

"I hate you, why did I start talking to you again?" Steve asks as he leans over the table, face scrunching up as he accidentally sets his hand down on a finger sandwich realizing too late his mistake, bread flattening and cucumber cream gushing out to cover his hand and the table.

"Because you needed more friends your own age and no matter how long we go without talking it's always going to be me and you baby." Steve shoots her a soft smile before his face pinches up again as he moves over to the sink looking to rid himself of the gross mess on his hand. He really is glad he and Carol made up even when she teases him.

"That's sweet and all but how do you know someone else isn't going to bid on your basket, it's not like Hargrove is the only one in town with good taste in music." Keith asks, eyeing the tickets as Carol slips them back into Steve's basket.

Steve has barely gotten the last of the cucumber off of his hand before he is turning around and hissing "Keith I swear to God if you bid on my basket I am going to kill you, why are you even here."

"I was bored and hungry." Keith says with a shrug, since Steve started working for him at Family Video and he realized he can cook, it has become a fairly regular occurrence.

"I left you alone too long and you just started picking up any old stray as if that gaggle of children always coming around isn't bad enough." Carol simpers, shooting Keith a sharp grin when he glares at her.

"You're not that great firecracker." Steve sighs as Keith makes the mistake of opening his mouth and he and Carol start bickering. Glancing at the clock he decides to leave them to it, he wants to get cleaned up before the auction, wants to look good enough that hopefully Billy will bid on him, he said he would as soon as Steve said he was a part of the auction, Steve really hopes he meant it.

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Steve is nervous peeking out from behind the thick velvet curtain in front of the auditorium stage separating him and the rest of the unlucky soles being auctioned off for renovations on town hall. He has not seen Billy milling about anywhere yet and he is beginning to think when Billy said "*Nothing in the world could make me miss the chance to own your ass for a couple hours.*" with a wink, that he had honestly been joking.

Steve's heart rate kicks up as he sees blond curls and a red collared shirt that looks like it might be Billy but before he can get a good look, pain shoots up his side as he is pinched. Steve curses as he turns the curtain falling closed behind him as he sets a glare on Carol who just smiles up at him feigning innocence like that would ever work on Steve, they have known each other for far too long for that to ever be successful. "Stop worrying Stevie-baby it's almost time, come on time to line up."

"Is it too late to back out?" Steve asks, the idea of being up there and being auctioned off is rather unappealing and again he cannot help but think what if Billy was joking. Or if he was not, what if someone else manages to outbid him and it is someone who would use it as an excuse to make him miserable for the day. He saw Tommy out there in the crowd and god he hopes Tommy does not bid on him, that

would be a nightmare, every chance he gets he takes to dig at all of Steve's most sensitive spots.

"Yes it is but it's going to be fine Stevie, I saw Billy and Robin show up just a few minutes ago. They're going to bid on us and we're going to have super cute first dates and make them fall in love with us." Carol says smoothing out his clothes, the ones she forced him into with some excuse about " *Everyone will be dressed up, it's mandatory.* " but Steve knows that was a lie because Avery showed up in overalls that have mud caked into his knees and no one has said anything to him about it.

"Wait, didn't you and Robin already go on a first date?" Steve asks, he is pretty sure that is what they were doing last Saturday when they ditched him on movie night. Steve did not have anyone to explain what the hell was going on during it, Keith and Billy both far too invested in what was going on in the movie to do more than shush him.

There is a fine blush dusting Carol's cheeks as she grins up at Steve "Well we had plenty of firsts but we ended up staying in, on account of how wet we both got."

Steve nods as Carol turns and starts walking away before he remembers "Wait it wasn't raining that night."

Carol turns back to him laughing "Give it a minute to sink in baby, you'll get it." She tells him with a wink.

"Oh!" Steve says as he flushes a few minutes later, feeling silly for not having gotten it immediately.

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"How the fuck am I supposed to know which basket is pretty boys?"

Billy hisses practically attached to Robin's hip as they make their way around the room looking for the aforementioned basket and the basket Carol made that she is supposed to be bidding on.

"Carol said there would be a ribbon." Robin mumbles as she tries to examine the contents of a basket covered in cellophane and Billy glowers at all the baskets with decorative ribbons attached.

"What fucking color?" Billy asks, ignoring a few Hawkins' mothers and daughters eyeing him with interest, he is not here for that.

"She forgot to mention." Robin sighs, looping an arm around Billy's elbow when one of the women eyeing Billy looks like they are going to approach, when the woman does not immediately change course Robin glares at her until she does. Billy is not going to say anything about the way Robin giving him a hand without asking makes him feel but he does calm a little, clapping a hand over hers, a soft feeling in his chest as he shoots her a smile, he is glad they ended up becoming friends. Billy scans the room, looking for someone who could help, one of the kids would be ideal, he is sure at least one of them would know what color the ribbon is, if not what is in the basket, with the way they are always loitering around Steve house but they are not here and why would they be, most of the kids and non-single parents are off at the games being held in a field not too far from here. Looking up at the big hanging clock above the double doors Billy is pretty sure right now the three legged race is happening which means El and Max are probably making fools of the boys.

Robin suddenly starts moving again, dragging Billy back to the here and now and across the room to where Keith is standing. "Which basket is Steve's?"

"What makes you think I know that?" Keith asks, mouth twisted up in an almost sneer.

"Oh please, work is closed and you weren't over bugging me and Billy

where else are you going to go?” Robin asks, eyeing him suspiciously.

“You do know I have actual friends right, I do spend time with other people.” Keith says with a sigh. Robin and Billy both give little shrugs, he has a point but he also spends ninety percent of his time around them when he is not working.

“Okay fine, how the hell are we supposed to figure this out.” Billy fusses wearily, worried that someone else is going to bid on Steve’s basket and get to spend the day with him on a romantic picnic. Billy is going to kick someone's ass if that happens. Billy has been trying to figure out how to ask Steve on a date without actually having to ask because nothing has seemed good enough when Steve asked if he was going to come to this stupid event, asked if he would be bidding on anyone with a shy look that made Billy melt. Billy is sure that Steve wants him to bid on his picnic basket. Well he was not sure at first, he had wavered on it, thought maybe he was just being hopeful reading into it, or that maybe Steve just wanted him to bid on it to help out the town but Robin and Carol both insist that is not the case and that Steve very much wants it to be a date, so Billy cannot miss his chance.

Keith lets out another big sigh, rolling his eyes before pointing toward a basket to their left. “Yellow ribbon is Steve’s, the one with the purple ribbon over there is Carol’s.” He says hand moving to point at a near identical basket to the right. “I have other people I’m friends with.” He insists once more before they are splitting away from each other to go see what is in the contents of the baskets they need to bid on.

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“I think Steve’s basket is up next.” Robin says from next to him and Billy nods, eyeing the basket with the yellow ribbon as the assistant hands it over to the auctioneer with a little card listing the contents. The auctioneer reads it out loud before opening the bids and Billy immediately shoots his hand in the air getting a grin from Steve

standing with the rest of the group being auctioned off, the lot of them lined up across the back of the stage.

He is not the only one bidding, women and men alike bid on Steve's basket, some with interest toward him, others merely interested in the context of his basket. Billy sees Tommy's hand shoot up and he is foaming at the mouth as he throws his hand up immediately, there is no way he is missing his chance for a picnic date with Steve to Tommy. The problem is even as others give up the price going too high for them, Tommy does not, he just keeps raising his hand and Billy can tell Steve is getting worried Tommy is going to win. He can see it in the hunch of his shoulders and the way he grabs Carol's hand whispering to her with an air of panic. As the price rises even higher Billy starts to worry he might actually lose his picnic date to Tommy.

"Robin, how much cash do you have left after bidding on Carol?" Billy whispers as Tommy raises his hand again, outbidding him and this time he does not have the cash to up his bid. He could still out bid him but without the cash on hand to back it up at the end Steve would just be forfeited into a picnic date with Tommy when Billy cannot produce.

"I got fifty." She says as she thumbs through the cash, she barely has it in hand separated from her payment for Carol's basket before Billy is snatching it up and throwing his hand up in the air before the auctioneer can pronounce the basket sold to Tommy.

"Fuck, fuck, I'm going to kill that freckled weasel." Billy hisses when Tommy immediately outbids him, shooting him a smirk and Billy is sure he knows exactly whose basket he is bidding on.

"I got money you can borrow for a price." Keith pipes up from behind them, holding up the proof quickly to keep Billy from getting too snappy with him.

"What's your price?" Billy asks with a sneer, as the auctioneer asks



for any more bids.

"I want the Scorpions tickets from Steve's basket and the wine from Carol's." Keith says shooting Robin a wide grin.

"We agree." Billy says angrily, pinching Robin when she goes to protest, she and Keith can fight about it later. He really wanted to go to that concert but either way he will be missing out on it and he cannot risk missing his picnic date with Steve to negotiate with Keith. He snatches the money before announcing his new bid, three hundred dollars higher than the last one. He stares Tommy down daring him to up the ante, watches him attempt to rally the funds from the man standing next to him to no avail. Billy stands there smugly shooting a smile at Steve when he is announced the winner.

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Carol and Steve come out with the rest of those auctioned off baskets in hand, making a beeline for their dates. Steve is excited, Billy spent a lot of money in order to win his basket, that is a good sign, that means Billy really wanted this picnic date with him, or he just really wanted the Scorpions tickets Steve put in his basket. Steve chews on his bottom lip trying to remind himself that Billy spent way more than those tickets are worth, he could have just got himself some and saved himself some money if he was not interested in an actual date with Steve. Carol catches his hand giving it a squeeze and a reassuring smile, "Stop over thinking it Stevie." They find Robin and Billy over near the back of the room with Keith and Steve has sweat pricking at his palms as they approach and Billy's blue eyes find him with an easy grin and the worry drains back out of him.

"Hey pretty boy." Billy greets moving closer, hand falling to the handle of the basket, their pinkies just touching as he asks "So where is our romantic picnic date taking place?" letting his pinkie touch a little firmer. Steve looks real cute and pretty in his light yellow shirt and tan slacks, like he is going to a Sunday morning service and Billy wants to play the devil corrupting him.

“Well there’s this big willow-” Steve starts excitedly only to cut off with a hiss as Carol pinches him.

“No, that's where we’re going!” She hisses, glaring him down.

“Come on Carol all of the other good romantic places,” Steve glances at Billy with a flush creeping over his cheek, one that matches Billy’s as he gives him a bright pleased smile, reassured that they are on the same page “ are going to be taken and you already technically had a first date with Robin.”

“I told you that wasn’t really a date” Carol goes pink in the cheeks from annoyance as Robin watches them with amusement playing over her face, she always gets a kick out of how fast Carol can make Steve fold.

“Eh, pretty sure it still counts.” Steve insists face all scrunched up until Carol moves closer, hand reaching out for him and he is scuttling back one hand thrown up in surrender. “Don’t pinch me again, I’m going to have a bruise!” Steve whines, pouting, he really wanted to take Billy there for their picnic date, it is really pretty and secluded.

“I got an idea of where we can go pretty boy, let Carol have her tree.” Billy reassures, he is sure wherever Steve wanted to take him would have been nice, but there is a nice secluded field full of wildflowers a few miles from the highway that Billy found his first summer in Hawkins and he is willing to bet Steve will find it real nice too.

Carol shoots them a smug look turning back to Robin grinning and Robin is just making heart eyes at her with her own grin teasing “You should give dingus another pinch for good measure.”

“Robin!” Steve hisses out betrayed and quickly shifts further away,

hand still on the basket but moving to put Billy between them as the girls laugh.

“How about we get out of her before fire crotch can give it a try,” Billy says, they both ignore Carol’s annoyed scoff laughing as Robin bites her lip trying not to say anything because she is pretty sure Carol will be less inclined to go on their date if she adds any validity to the stupid nickname. “The only bruises I want on you are from my mouth.”

Steve goes a few shades redder looking at Billy through his lashes, excitement coiling in his belly only for confusion to take hold as Keith butts in. “Not so fast, I believe we had a deal and I’ll take my payment before you leave.” Steve shares a confused look with Carol as both Billy and Robin proceed to dig out items from their baskets.

“We have to go get more wine, it’s Billy’s fault. I’ll explain on the way. Steve we’re raiding your parents wine collection Billy can explain.” Robin huffs, thrusting the bottle of wine hard against Keith’s stomach making him groan as he grabs it. She is dragging Carol through the crowd toward the exit before Steve can even get his mouth open to question, eyes instead watching Billy curiously.

“Wait, what is happening?” Steve asks as he watches Billy pull the tickets out and hand them to Keith with an annoyed look, both of them ignoring Steve for the time being.

“Good doing business with you Hargrove.” Keith says pleased as he takes his spoils and leaves them. Billy turns back to Steve and gets an arm around his waist pulling him to the door, Tommy is a little too close on their way out so Billy takes the opportunity to elbow him in the gut, ignoring his shouts as he drags Steve outside.

“Are you going to tell me what’s going on now, I got those tickets for you.” Steve is confused as to why Billy would just hand them over to Keith, he is pretty sure Billy likes the Scorpions, it is why he picked

those tickets.

"I know." Billy sighs as they get to his car and he reaches into his open window pulling out the little bouquet of Sunflowers he may have technically stolen this morning, stems all cleaned up and a light blue ribbon securing them because he tossed them at Robin and begged for help making them look presentable after the impulse steal. It is totally worth all the teasing she gave him for the look of delight Steve has when Billy hands it to him and so is the money he now owes Keith. "Tommy kind of drove up the price for your basket, I had to borrow money from Keith and the asshole had some demands in return." Billy explains, holding the door open for Steve to slide in, flushing when Steve leans in and kisses his cheek.

"Thank you for not letting Tommy win." Steve says and Billy huffs, he was never going to let that weasel get the chance. Billy just gives a shrug as Steve slides in running around to the other side as Steve settles the basket on the floor boards between his legs, the bouquet of sunflowers in his lap. "I can get us another couple of tickets, I mean if this goes well and you maybe wanted to go next week, with me." Steve rambles until Billy drops a hand just above his knee as he backs out of the parking lot.

"Pretty boy even if for some unfathomable reason our little picnic date doesn't go well, I want to go with you to that Scorpions concert as our second date. For our third date I'm thinking the zoo over in the city, I know they got that new animal exhibit opening you've been wanting to see." Billy says, grinning at the little delighted noise that comes out of Steve.

"You mean it?" Steve asks, biting his lip hoping Billy is not just teasing him because that all sounds perfect.

Billy catches his hand as he hits the break at the stop sign leaving the parking lot and he brings their clasped hands up to his mouth. "Yeah pretty boy I mean it, I can't wait to take you to see those silly little markets you love." Billy says, kissing the back of Steve's hand, blue

eyes boring into Steve for a long minute until that smile finally splits his face and Billy drops their hands back to Steve's thigh still holding his hand tight as he drives them to their picnic date.

**-End**

**Author's Note:**

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